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FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2133

INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HO CHI MINH CITY 000160

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/14/2017

TAGS: PGOV KCOR PTER PINR VM

SUBJECT: (C) EXPLOSION REPORTED OUTSIDE HCMC HOME OF PM DZUNG

REF: HCMC 157

CLASSIFIED BY: Seth Winnick, Consul General , CONGEN HCMC, State Department.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

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¶1. (C/NF) Reliable media contacts in HCMC confirmed to us that a small improvised explosive device went off outside a home belonging to Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dzung in HCMC's District 3 sometime on February 12. No injuries or damage was reported. Rumors of this incident circulated on February 13. (Per reftel, the Prime Minister reportedly obtained this home in an under the table deal when he was serving in the Ministry of Public Security. Dzung's ownership of this valuable property is supposedly not public knowledge.) Our contacts told us that the media was under strict orders from the Party not to report on any aspect of the story so as not to draw any connection to the Prime Minister. The Australian Federal Police representative in HCMC told RSO that local police claimed that a transformer had exploded in the neighborhood and there was "no more to the story." We drove by the area of the reported incident on the afternoon of February 14. We did not see any unusual police presence or any evidence of any type of transformer damage or recent repair.

¶2. (C/NF) Comment: The incident comes on the heels of the Prime Minister's February 9 web-chat, in which he promised a strong personal response against corruption. A token explosion in front of the Prime Minister's ill-gotten gain is a reminder about the danger of casting stones, even if the house is not actually made of glass. End Comment.

WINNICK